

'We want to get on with business of Govt'

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The Barisan Nasional wants to "get on with the business of running the country without hindrance."

This was why it sought a fresh mandate a year before its term expired, the Prime Minister said today.

He said persistent speculation about the general election appeared "to be taking too much of everybody's time" and added that this pre-occupation was not good for the country.

"Everyone is speculating. This has also depressed the stock market, which is not good. We want to get on with the business of running the

country."

He said the Barisan Nasional supreme council had also agreed on a new slogan — *Tradisi Membela Rakyat* ('Traditional Champion of the People') — for the election.

This reflected the Barisan's "tradition of continuously championing the people, irrespective of race".

The slogan was also the underlying theme of the Barisan's manifesto, which had been agreed upon by all component parties and which would be made known soon.

The Prime Minister said the new slogan did not mean the Government had dropped its motto of a 'Clean, Effi-

cient and Trustworthy' administration adopted during the 1982 polls.

"Here in Malaysia it is normal to have a new slogan every time we hold a general election. It does not mean that if we coin a new slogan, we forget the old one.

No threat

"We will still practise *Bersih, Cekap dan Amanah*. In fact, this will remain the thrust of the Government's administration."

Asked to elaborate on the issues the Barisan was likely to face, Dr Mahathir said there were no problems that could be turned into major issues.

"However, the opposition will always want to make every problem a major issue. But as far as the Barisan is concerned, we want to have stability and independence to make our decisions, free from outside interference."

Dr Mahathir also said the coalition was confident of winning a two-thirds majority "or more" and did not feel the election pact between Pas, SDF, Nasma and PSRM would pose a threat.

"That is the hope of Pas. But, as I have said before, by having an electoral pact, Pas is digging its own grave."

On the possibility of Pas gaining control of the East Coast States, Dr Mahathir said: "East Coast or West Coast, the Barisan is strong and we can win.

"But in a general election, the people will decide and we may possibly lose some seats. I don't know. In an election, anything can happen.

"God willing, we will perform better simply because the people want a strong and stable Government."

Dr Mahathir also said Barisan component leaders had reached a general agreement today on the allocation of seats.

However, he said there were two or three States which had yet to resolve their seat allocations.

He declined to identify them, adding that "we will resolve this in a couple of days".

It is believed the States involved are Sarawak, Sabah and Penang.